

A decorative border with intricate floral and scrollwork patterns, rendered in a dark gray color, framing the central text.

**my poor heart  
aches (with every  
step you take)**

**pinkhearteyes**

## my poor heart aches (with every step you take) by pinkhearteyes

**Category:** IT (2017)

**Genre:** Aged-Up Character(s), Ben Hanscom - Freeform, Beverly Marsh - Freeform, Bisexual Richie Tozier, Drinking, Eddie Kaspbrak - Freeform, Hair-pulling, M/M, Mike Hanlon - Freeform, Richie Tozier - Freeform, Smoking, Stanley Uris - Freeform, also hand jobs, also there's blow jobs, eddie's obsessed with richie's curls, eddie's stupidly in love, lol also, richie works at the cinema, richie's in a fucking rock band, they are 19!!

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**Summary:**

Eddie meets Richie at a dingy bar, and falls in love a bit. Richie's the guitarist and lead singer of a band. He wears all black, and Eddie gets worked up. They have sugary drinks, and alleyway talks, during which Eddie fears for his life, slightly. Richie has blue fairy lights in his bedroom, and a bed that's just a mattress on the floor, and Eddie wants to get into his pants.

# 1. Chapter 1

Eddie is introduced to him through a mutual friend, Beverly, who's currently ducking her head to meet the rim of her glass. It's a grey friday evening, and Eddie had let himself be pulled to the local bar, more out of total and utter boredom than anything else. The guy Beverly's been talking about all night, is by the stage, fiddling with a speaker, and Beverly points him out.

Miraculously, he spots her, and bounces down from the stage quickly, pulling her into a hug, with a cheerful: "Bev!"

He's tall, and lanky, and his hair is dark and big and curly, shining even under the bar's dim lights. He's wearing all black, and his jeans have rips in them. Eddie swallows around the lump forming in his throat. He wouldn't say he has a type, but the guy in front of him undoubtedly looks like something straight out of his wet dreams.

Eddie stands beside them awkwardly, watches as Beverly squeezes at the guy's skinny arms, makes some muscle joke. He sees him wink, hears something about holding the guitar every night.

'He's in the band?' Eddie thinks to himself. He tries to remember Beverly mentioning it during the day leading up to this. He's not prepared for the way his stomach surges, a little.

And speak of the devil then, Beverly turns to him, and gives him a pointed look, before saying:

"Richie, this is Eddie. He's just moved back home after studying in New York."

It's clear what she's trying to do, with her winking and nudging. Eddie doesn't mind. He hasn't gotten laid since a few long months back, in his little Queens apartment.

"NYC got the best of you? I'm Richie"

Richie is a charming name. Short for Richard, perhaps. His eyes are big and dark, and very shiny.

Eddie does a sort of half-laugh, holds his hand out. Richie's palm is dry and warm, and Eddie's own hand feels small in his.

"Eddie"

Beverly taps at his shoulder, mumbles something about getting them drinks. Eddie wonders if Richie's oblivious to her obvious attempts at getting them together. He's currently standing with his hands shoved in his pockets, craning his neck to look over the crowd. They're awkwardly quiet for a few seconds, and Eddie shuffles his feet on the linoleum floor, his nice going-out shoes squeaking a little.

"You caught me at my best tonight. I usually wear glasses." Richie says, out of the blue.

"I don't see anything wrong with glasses."

"Oh, they're awful. Huge, clunky ones"

Eddie studies his face carefully, looking for clues, for directions what to say next. Richie is smirking though, taking the piss, and Eddie feels himself relax instantly.

"So, you excited to be back in Maine?"

"Oh yeah, sure. New York didn't have enough depressing elders and snotty kids."

Richie's laugh is loud and wheezy, and Eddie almost jumps.

"Don't forget moose!"

"Oh, don't get me started!"

Richie's still laughing, his face scrunched up prettily, when Beverly returns with colourful drinks. They look a bit childish, blue with frosted sugary rims, but they're nineteen, and Eddie likes the taste of maraschino cherries all too much to care.

When Beverly spots them, Richie still doubled over with laughter (for some reason. The moose joke wasn't even that funny, in Eddie's opinion), she raises her eyebrows in a way that clearly says "Told you

so!". Eddie rolls his eyes, shakes his head, subtly - so Richie won't notice - anything to tell her not to jinx it.

Beverly offers Richie a sip of her drink, and he takes a gulp. Eddie might have laughed a little, but is too occupied watching Richie's lips around the glass.

Then, someone's calling his name, a loud shout of "Rich!" and Beverly tells him good luck. He smiles, his mouth stained blue, and ducks into the gathering crowd.

Eddie sees Richie put the guitar strap around his neck, sees him twisting the tuning pegs. He feels a bit breathless.

"You didn't tell me he's in the band" Eddie wheezes, only then remembering Beverly's betrayal. It's a surprise she hears him, as the crowd is discussing excitedly.

There's a glint in her eyes, and she doesn't look a bit sorry.

"I thought you figured it out on your own!"

"Yeah, I had to, thank you very much." he snorts.

Eddie has more to say, wants to angrily ask her how she kept this incredibly attractive, guitar-playing, funny, tall friend from him for so long without telling. His words are drowned out in the noise of Richie beginning to speak. His words resonate in the bar, vibrate off the brick walls.

"Ladies and Gents! We have some great things on the menu for you tonight. We got some Nirvana, some Pixies, you name it!"

Richie is charming, and - Eddie realises as the bands starts playing - incredibly good.

The other band members are amazing as well, but Eddie finds his eyes being pulled to Richie more often than he'd admit to himself. Even wearing dark from head to toe - including his dark bird's nest of hair - he seems to radiate and glow in the low-budget spotlight aimed at him.

Eddie fights the urge to get closer to the stage for the sole purpose of watching Richie's hands more closely, caressing the fretboard of the guitar almost gently. He's never been one to play instruments, had tried the flute back in his childhood years, but given it up sometime along the way. He can't remember why.

Richie's swift fingers pick the solo for the Pixies' song 'Where Is My Mind'. Eddie hopes he's not imagining the way Richie's eyes seem to search the crowd. It's a stupid fucking thought, because Richie's up on stage and looking out over his audience is a completely normal thing to do. Still, Eddie can't help but imagine he's looking for him.

Turns out the band has way more than Pixies and Nirvana. they play a Led Zeppelin song, Richie's vocals sweet and raspy into the mic. There's Guns N' Roses, and The Smiths.

When Richie gets off the stage during the pause, his cheeks are flushed, and the curls closest to his face stick to his skin slightly, damp with sweat. A girl in a low-cut shirt offers to buy him a drink, and he thanks her, but turns the offer down. Eddie sees how Richie gets a free beer from the barman, and wonders if it's pure charm, or the perks of being in a band.

"Band privileges?" He asks Richie when he appears by his side. Beverly's disappeared during the band's second song. She squeezed Eddie's arm, before slipping through the crowd, probably to dance, or kiss someone under an abandoned staircase.

"Absolutely. All the Way. I'll fucking drink to that."

He raises the bottle, condensation clouding the neck of it. Droplets of beer make stripes in the foggy glass. Eddie watches his adam's apple bob as he drinks.

"Girls" Richie says, barely nodding his head in the direction of the drink-girl. Eddie already knows who he's talking about. "Never cared much for them"

Eddie feels his face go hot. He's met few people who have shamelessly, even casually addressed their sexuality like this. Like Richie does.

"Yeah. Agreed." he says, dumbly, because he doesn't know what else to say.

"You know, Eddie Spaghetti, Beverly didn't give you enough credit for being both funny and cute."

Eddie's eyes travel up from where they've been inspecting the colourful guitar picks poking out from Richie's jean pocket. Richie's grinning wide, teetering on the edge of looking mad. It suits him though. Eddie wonders what he looks like with glasses on.

"I'm flattered. Also, don't call me that" he replies.

"Cute?" Richie says, because he's an asshole, apparently.

"Spaghetti. You asshole." Eddie says, telling him like it is. There's a smile bubbling up in his throat though. Richie giggles softly.

Then, there's a sudden hustle by the stage, and Richie gets distracted.

"Fuck. I think we're starting again. You can finish this if you want."

He presses the half-full beer bottle in Eddie's hand. Eddie may want to make out with the guy, as soon as possibly actually, but he's not planning on drinking from someone else's bottle anytime soon.

"Can't be wasted if I'm going to keep playing."

He makes a good point.

It's ridiculously attractive, somehow, how Richie snatches a bright green guitar pick from his pocket, to put it between his teeth.

"You're really good" Eddie says, as the 'Good luck' that feels too romantic to say out loud.

Richie's eyes travel up his body, finish on a wink as they make eye contact. He takes out the pick from between his teeth for a second, says: "That's what all the ladies say."

Eddie feels himself grow slowly hotter, more bothered throughout the rest of the evening. He watches Richie's steady, confident grip on the

guitar. His eyelids droop in the way a guitarist in an angry rock band comprised of 19-year olds' eyes should. Eddie decides after twenty minutes that he definitely wants to suck him off.

They end the show by playing 'Bigmouth Strikes Again' by The Smiths. It's a bit of a weird song to end on, and Eddie asks him about it. Beverly's still not returned, and Eddie hadn't expected her to, knows she's fine.

"Oh shit. I can't believe I forgot to tell the audience that." Richie holds up a packet of cigarettes, in a question, and Eddie shrugs, meaning: sure, why not.

"So basically, my friends used to call me bigmouth a lot. And they had this, stupid fucking joke-" Richie shows Eddie a staircase that leads them behind the stage, where a heavy looking door awaits them. "-that the song was written about me."

Richie pushes the door open, and Eddie has the time to think about how many alleyway murders happen yearly. Richie's not like that though. Right? He's just met the guy, after all.

"They'd keep fucking playing it every time I showed up. So, I made it a tradition to always end on that song."

He gets a lighter out of his pocket, flicks it with what looks like years of experience, and lets the flame lick the cigarette. He holds the packet out for eddie.

"You want one?"

"No thanks. I had asthma when I was younger."

Richie nods, not making a fuss, and leans back against the wall, taking the first drag of his cigarette.

Eddie's not actually sure if he ever had it though. He watches Richie for a second, regrets his answer.

"Fuck it, give me one."

"You sure? I'm impressed enough by you already, Eds. You don't need



to do this for me!"

Eddie's cheeks heat a little.

"Stop calling me that, I swear I'll gouge your eyes out."

He coughs a little on the first hit, but quickly accustoms to it, enjoying the way the smoke curls.

"Do you smoke just because you're the lead singer in a band, that plays at bars- like this?" He asks, feeling more than a bit proud of himself for making casual conversation.

Richie tips his head back, and exhales smoke. The column of his throat is on full display, and Eddie just wants to go home and get off in the shower as soon as possible. Richie laughs, a little.

"At bars like this shithole, you mean?"

"That's not what I meant"

Richie looks amused. He lets a hand brush Eddie's hip. The touch is brief, barely there. Gone before it came. Still, Eddie's heart is doing somersaults in the hollow of his chest.

"It's fine. I admit to it being a shithole. And about the smoking, why yes I do."

His eyes are darker than they have been all night, and he cocks his head to the side a bit.

"So tell me more about yourself, Eddie from New York."

Eddie's lungs choose that exact moment to betray him, and he coughs weakly.

"You don't smoke often, that's one thing" Richie says, blowing a thin cloud of smoke in his face. It warms his cheeks, smells like cigarette smoke usually does, layered with something that's probably only in Eddie's imagination.

"There's not much to know, really."

"Why did you move back?" Richie seems strangely interested in the New York-related part of Eddie's life, for a reason he doesn't really understand. It was a little over two years of studying, living in Queens, eating pasta more than anything else, and making some half-friends, some better ones.

"The moose were calling? Big Apple boyfriend didn't work out?"

Ah. So that's why. Richie asks it carefully enough for Eddie to snap it up, and latch onto it. He wants to know if he's dating anyone.

"I wouldn't call it that." He says, because he can be a tease if he wants to. Richie's had half a beer and some of Beverly's drink, earlier. Despite that, his eyes are sober, following Eddie's every move.

"I've never really had a serious boyfriend." Eddie continues.

Richie hums.

"No?" He has a hand on the wall behind Eddie.

"What about you, Bigmouth?"

Richie chokes out a surprised laugh, the tension in the air temporarily gone.

"I may have a big mouth, but it gets the job done. Which says a lot about my dating history, actually." Richie says, doing a ridiculous smoochy face.

It undoubtedly gets Eddie a bit worked up, thinking about that mouth on him. He tries to hide that, by laughing.

"Alright. I'm choosing to ignore what you just said."

Richie laughs, tosses his cigarette butt to the ground, crushes it underneath his ratty checkered sneaker.

Their conversation about dating takes a more casual route, after that. Richie's dated boys, and girls. It's not a new concept to Eddie, he wasn't born yesterday, but Richie seems to be more careless than most, sexuality apparently not being a big deal to him. Eddie wishes

he would have been the same when coming out to his mother. He doesn't want to think of it then, the reason he moved to New York in the first place.

Eddie catches Richie looking at him. He wants to kiss him, square on the mouth, wants more than that, but apparently he still has to wait.

"Do you maybe want to- get out of here?"

It's a promise of more than making out and an alleyway blow job, his knees getting dirty on the forever rain-slick tiled floor. Eddie isn't going to complain about that.

"Will you wait for me while I get my jacket?"

Richie stuffs his electric guitar into the back of his shitty BMW, his breath making little clouds in the night, since it's getting cold already. Eddie tries to push his conscience away as he grabs the dirty door handle.

The drive is short, maybe four minutes, but Richie tells him inbetween songs on the radio that he prefers driving instead of walking, especially when he brings the guitar home. He has his own apartment a few blocks away from the pathetic shopping centre in town.. They listen to a song Richie tells him is 'This Is The Day' by a band with a stupid name, and Richie plays an invisible piano on the steering wheel, wiggles his head along to the riff, his curls bouncing.

Richie's apartment is angsty. There's vinyls littered all over the floor, and various instruments spread in the apartment. There's a tiny, tiny looking guitar on the kitchen table that Eddie is interested in, and Richie tells him is a ukulele. He strums it, softly, and Eddie thinks of pearly white beaches and crystal clear water.

"That's not very you, is it?"

"Oh because it's not a rock instrument? I have a soft side as well, Eds. Let a man live."

Richie disappears into a room, and Eddie waits, standing around a little awkwardly.

"You can have a drink from the fridge if you feel like it!" Richie calls out from the bathroom, and Eddie goes into the kitchen. The fridge is full of magnets with different words on them, and all over the fridge are different sentences like 'blue ice cream tastes of sunshine', and 'he is a moonlight poet'.

He hears Richie enter, and says, without turning around:

"Very poetic."

"Thank you! An alternative career for sure."

When Eddie turns around Richie is wearing his glasses, and Eddie's stomach drops. He's still wearing the ripped jeans, but now with a white t-shirt with a faded mtv logo. There's wrinkles on it and it smells faintly of laundry detergent, even from where Eddie's standing. Eddie doesn't know if he's imagining Richie's hair being shinier and curlier, like he put something in it. Fuck. There's a faint scent of a cologne, over the laundry detergent, that Eddie recognises, but can't place.

Richie leads him to his bedroom, grabbing beers for them. He doesn't even have a proper bed. It's just a thick mattress on the floor, the ceiling above it plastered in posters and polaroids.

"Didn't want to feel like a liar without the glasses on. I'm usually wearing them anyways". Richie brings it up again. Maybe he's nervous. Eddie wonders with a sting, what sort of past interactions Richie's had to make him think so lowly of himself.

A liar. Perhaps because Richie thinks Eddie's less likely to drop to his knees on the bedroom floor when he sees Richie with the glasses on. It's somehow the direct opposite.

"They look great." Eddie manages to get out somewhat normally. His mind is full of kisses he wants to leave down Richie's neck, past the collar of his shirt.

"You think so?" Richie's voice is a soft rasp that has Eddie's dick twitching in his pants. He places a warm hand on Richie's arm, stroking up and down, a slow, repetitive motion. Richie's holding his

beer bottle, but hasn't opened it yet.

Eddie hums. "They suit you. You look hot." He fights the flush threatening to rise to his cheeks. He was the one who wanted to say it, after all. Eddie only then becomes aware of a song playing, a scratchy vinyl Richie must have put on while he was changing clothes.

Eddie remembers the song playing, from a distant New York memory. Perhaps he was with the guy Richie referred to as his 'Big Apple boyfriend'. It isn't far from the truth, what Richie said. He came and left, passed by like the subway train that would come every morning before the one Eddie took to school. It never stopped at his station, only swooped past at 8:20, pulling newspapers down on the train tracks with it.

Through the sound of the record playing, and his own buzzing head, he hears Richie's little huff.

"Really?"

Eddie leans in, achingly slow but breathtakingly fast. He can count each of Richie's freckles in the dim blue light from the cheap-looking fairy lights taped above the bed (mattress).

Eddie kisses him.

The beer bottles are squished awkwardly between them, Eddie's hand angled awfully. Their noses press against one another for a few seconds, before Richie desperately paws at his lower back, angles his head to the left, and kisses back, hard.

Richie pulls back, long enough for Eddie to get nervous, for him to pluck the beer bottles from their arms, putting them down on the floor. Long enough to utter a soft: "Fuck. I've been waiting for this all night." Against Eddie's lips.

Eddie whines a little, feels his palms tingle with adrenaline. "Really?" He mumbles between kisses, presses the words in a question against Richie's mouth.

Richie gently nudges his shoulders, telling him to sit down on the bed

(mattress).

"Ever since i saw you beside Beverly. I thought, 'Who's this lovely twink she wants to set me up with, this time?'"

Eddie snorts.

"You're all talk, aren't you?" Eddie gets his hands under Richie's shirt, thumbs at the warm skin he finds, strokes the dip of his waist.

Richie grabs him by the chin, between thumb and pointer finger, puckers his lips up a bit.

"What did we say about big mouths? Gets the job done."

His smirk is filthy, and Eddie doesn't have time to fire back, because Richie begins kissing down his neck, nips at the skin behind his ear before continuing down. Eddie whines, involuntarily, and bucks up into Richie's touch. He fists his hands in Richie's shirt - and why is it still on?

"Why is your shirt still on?"

"I don't need it off to blow you." Richie says matter-of-factly, and just like that, he's working the buttons of Eddie's jeans. Eddie hadn't been prepared, feels his dick do more than just stir in interest this time. He's full-on hardening before Richie's very eyes.

"Been wanting to do this all night, too. It was all I could think of while we were playing."

It's a dirty, arousing thought, and Eddie pulls Richie back for a sloppy kiss. Richie makes a big show of pulling Eddie's jeans off, and Eddie wiggles around, trying to be of at least some help.

"Let's just say I wasn't at my best tonight. Musically, I mean."

"I'm missing out."

Eddie's favourite pair of jeans gets tossed on the floor of Richie's bedroom.

"I'll get you you into our next show for free."

Richie's hand comes down Eddie's chest, brushes his abdomen, snakes it's way down his underwear.

Eddie hisses when Richie's hand wraps around him. It's a heavenly pressure, sweet friction, finally, after what feels like hours and hours of endless aching and pining.

Richie unceremoniously spits into his palm, shoves it back in Eddie's boxers. It's an extremely intense sort of pleasure, having a new person's hands on you, for the first time. Eddie's head falls back, and he's already teetering on the edge, inching closer. His stomach surges like a vacuum, and just when he thinks it can't get any better, Richie tugs his boxers all the way down, leans forward, and takes him down his throat.

Eddie is quick to fist a hand in Richie's hair, giving a tug. Richie's following groan vibrates in the back of his throat. He tongues Eddie's slit, perhaps as payback, and Eddie pulls his hair again, comes suddenly and unexpectedly, with an embarrassing noise that rings in the room.

Richie doesn't give him much time to recover, straddles his lap and wraps his hands around Eddie's neck. Eddie's mind is fuzzy with climax, but he knows Richie is still hard, can feel it against his thigh.

He tugs at Richie's hair again, pulling him in for a kiss, and Richie - again - whines shamelessly into his mouth.

"I like that" he says, not shamefully, but instead grinning a little goofily.

"You do, don't you?" Eddie works Richie's zipper down, gets his hand down his boxers, that are an awful faded pink, and it shouldn't be as hot as it is. Richie buries his head in the groove of Eddie's neck, his hands still wrapped around it, and grinds down onto Eddie's lap. He's coming seconds later, with a whimper Eddie wouldn't expect from a guy who wears ripped jeans, and whose apartment is full of rock albums.

Eddie's laying on the bed (mattress) when Richie returns from the bathroom, in only his mtv-shirt, that hits just above his knee. Eddie feels a little dizzy knowing he had to change because Eddie of all people made him come in his pants.

Richie flops down onto the mattress, accustoming to the shape of it quickly, curling into Eddie's side like he's always belonged there. Fuck. Richie doesn't only smell like cologne and detergent now, the faint scent of sex radiating from him.

"You know I read somewhere a hard mattress is much better for your back."

"Is that so, Eddie Spaghetti?" Richie's breath is warm against his neck, and Eddie feels chills all over.

"Yeah. And almost every survey done on it says the opposite. You know why?"

Richie scrunches his eyebrows together, lifts his head to meet Eddie's eyes and shakes his head.

"Nearly every survey done on it is sponsored by like, mattress companies!"

Richie drops his head back against his neck, the mattress shaking with his laughter. They are quiet after that, and Richie sleepily sucks a hickey into Eddie's neck, blows cold air on the wet, bruised skin. Eddie threads his fingers through Richie's hair, lets out shakey little breaths with every move of Richie's lips on his skin.

"Should I- leave?"

It's inevitable. The question is always brought up, has to be, no matter how much both of them want to avoid it. The question of: "Where do we move on from here? Is it a one-night stand, or one of many more to come?"

Richie doesn't answer for a while, and Eddie sits up, looking down at him.

"I don't know"



Eddie's stomach has gone up and down all night, a rollercoaster of emotions. This time, it drops further down than before, His heart coming alive and knocking at his ribs. It's like his last boyfriend, all over again.

There's tears burning somewhere, far back in his skull, and he sits fully up, beginning to look for his jeans that he had taken off, before crawling under the blanket.

Then, he feels long fingers circle his wrist, and Richie's looking up at him, smile all soft.

"You idiot. Of course you can stay. I want you to."

And with that, Richie pulls him down for another kiss.

## 2. oh can't you see (you belong to me)

### Summary for the Chapter:

Eddie contemplates the perks of a rock star boyfriend, specifically, Richie. Richie is rightfully bullied for his mattress bed, and Eddie is accused of being a drug dealer. Eddie is a chilled out dude, and Richie wears overalls. Beverly gives good advice, and Stan unknowingly (and unintentionally, probably) makes an amazing wingman. A viewing of Home Alone 2 happens, and so does both Christmas and New Year's.

The month that follows, is a lot less of 'Richie introducing him as his boyfriend to cool bandmates', and a lot more running into Richie over and over again.

Eddie slips out of Richie's apartment early saturday morning, Richie's number sleepily written down on a piece of paper and slipped into his pocket.

"Call me" Richie had said, shielding his eyes from the sunlight streaming through the window that Eddie had opened when he woke up. Eddie had pressed a kiss to his mouth, and tiptoed out into the hallway.

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He was planning on calling, he really was. A couple days pass though, and it doesn't seem to be happening. Beverly comes by his apartment with a bottle of wine. She gets him pleasantly tipsy and has him confess the past friday's events.

Eddie is a little drunk, sure, but not that stupid. When his story comes to the kiss, he ends it with a little "and..." and lets his unavoidable grin give it away. Beverly squeaks.

"You lucky bastard!"

They're quiet, for a minute.

"He had a gig again last night, you know" Beverly says then. Eddie is reminded of being five, girls in the playground having that same look of 'I know something you don't' on their faces.

"Yeah?" Eddie's going for an unbothered, calm approach. He's sitting on the armrest of his couch, pressing his forehead against the cool glass of the window.

"He asked about you."

"Really?" Eddie sits up now, unbothered approach out the window. Fuck that.

"Yeah. He seemed pretty bummed you didn't show up."

Eddie buries his face in his hands, and utters a long, drawn-out curse.

"He'll never want to see me again!"

Beverly rolls her eyes, gets up to put her empty glass in the kitchen sink.

"The point I'm trying to make here Eddie, is that he wants to see you again"

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The next day is a thursday, and the first day of December. Eddie goes shopping, a neat grocery list in his hand. He nearly drops his bag of apples, by the fruits, being as distracted as he is.

He's so occupied thinking of Richie, he nearly doesn't notice him, standing in the flesh, at the exits.

"Eds!" he calls out, and Eddie whips his head around so fast he nearly stumbles, close to dropping the apples for the second time that day.

Richie's tacking a hand-written poster to the pinboard by the sliding

doors. Eddie recognises his scrawly handwriting from the piece of paper with his number on it, that's still neatly folded in his pocket.

"Don't call me that. I thought I told you."

Richie grins, holds his hands up.

"Guilty as charged."

There's something in the air between them, that Eddie doesn't think he's imagining. Richie's smiling a little awkwardly, and scratching at the back of his head. His hair looks mussed with sleep, like it did when Eddie woke him up that morning nearly a week ago. His glasses are resting on his high cheek bones, and he looks pretty.

Eddie decides to break the silence.

"When are you performing again?" He looks over Richie's shoulder, to the little poster. He can clearly read the words 'Saturday' and 'five dollars'.

"Oh yeah!" Richie looks a little lost for a second. Eddie realises he's wearing mismatched socks.

"Again on saturday. If you wanna come" he says, and raises his eyebrows a little, like he's about to acknowledge the innuendo, but thinks better of it.

"Five dollars? I don't know..."

"I promised I'd get you in for free, didn't I?"

It's a confirmation last friday actually happened, and Eddie feels stupidly giddy. Richie grins back at him.

"How else will you get your rock star money?"

Richie laughs a little, and it's squeaky and delightful.

"I'm sure I'll find a way"

Richie buys him an ice cream cone from the misplaced-looking guy standing outside.

"Who the fuck sells ice cream in December?" Richie whispers against Eddie's ear. Eddie feels shivers down his back. It's getting pretty cold already, with a promise of snow. Eddie's wrapped up in a scarf for the day, and so is the ice cream guy. They give him a pitiful smile as they leave.

"Strawberry for you, my dear Edward" Richie says in a dumb, British accent that Eddie never wants to hear again.

"You really didn't have to"

"What else will I spend my rock star money on then?"

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The next time they meet, is indeed the following Saturday. Eddie's messed with his hair a bit, put some gel or foam in it, he can't remember. He feels good, in a button-up he hasn't worn in a while, and jeans that he knows look nice.

Richie has him floored. He's wearing fucking overalls, out of all things. His hair is the least unruly Eddie's seen it so far, even though it's not saying much. It's combed into a swoopy quiff though, and even though Eddie's here with a big group of Beverly's friends, he barely talks to them, is too occupied looking to the stage.

Richie spots him after they're done playing, and his face lights up in a genuine smile.

"I like the overalls." Eddie says. They're outside by Richie's car, smoking.

"Why thank you, Eds."

It's a bit soon for nicknames. Eddie barely knows him. Still, Richie keeps using them.

"Shut up."

Richie's challenging "Make me" is the reason Eddie follows him home that same night. Richie's hair comes undone and curly under Eddie's fingers.

He wakes up next to Richie, on his stupid mattress bed, and feels too much like he's been there before. It's the same kiss-on-the-mouth, call-me routine as last time. Eddie leaves with a smile on his face, and a breakfast bagel shoved into his hands by Richie, because "You can't leave without eating anything!".

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He does call Richie then, two days later.

"I miss you." he wants to say, but doesn't. It's a bit creepy. Eddie isn't creepy. He's a chilled out dude. Instead he says: "Do you want to come over?"

Richie does a tour of his apartment. He whistles, lowly, as he comes out of the bathroom with the nice tub.

"You mentioned studying but you never mentioned being a drug dealer on the side!"

Eddie rolls his eyes. Richie's being ridiculous.

"I'm an only child, so..."

It isn't really enough of an explanation. His mother still sends him money, sure, even if Eddie stubbornly refuses to talk to her unless it's an emergency. Point is, when he studied in New York, he had some supporting jobs, and saved up.

"Spoiled." Richie teases.

Later, Eddie presses him down into the mattress of Eddie's own, very proper bed.

"No floor-mattresses here" he states, and kisses down Richie's neck. Richie helps him tug his shirt off his head.

"Will you shut up about that already?" Richie laughs. His hands are wound in Eddie's hair, and Eddie just shakes his head, kisses further down. The room is surprisingly quiet when Richie isn't saying anything, the only sound being his little breathy gasps, and the kisses Eddie leaves down his chest.

-

After their third hook up, Eddie becomes a little panicky. He can't seem to forget the boy he knew back in New York, who'd promise him the world when they were alone, but would barely look at him when they were out with friends. Jacob, his name had been, and thinking about him makes Eddie shudder. He doesn't want his memories of Richie to be like that.

He knocks on the door of Beverly's apartment, that same night. She's playing music, and there's already people there.

He's met most of them at least once, but there's a new guy he doesn't know at all. He reaches his hand out and introduces himself as Ben.

"Ben is my boyfriend." she confesses in the kitchen, a happy flush on her cheeks.

"I'm happy for you." Eddie says, and he genuinely is. He does feel a little sting of jealousy though, and hates it.

Beverly looks at him, concerned.

"Have you seen Richie again?"

"Yeah. It's not like, he wants something official though."

"Have you asked him?"

Eddie hasn't. He watches Ben sling his arm over Beverly's shoulder in the living room, and decides to give it a chance, maybe.

-

The next week, one of Ben's friends is having a housewarming party, and Ben&Bev - as Eddie has taken a liking to calling the two of them - cooperatively seem to decide Eddie is miserable, and persuade him to join them.

Ben's friend turns out to be Stanley Uris, a guy Eddie went to school with. Eddie remembers him being mostly quiet, and tidy. The Stan that greets them is smiley, and remembers Eddie well.

"You still take all those medicines?" he asks when Eddie helps him with glasses from the kitchen.

"No. Thank god". It hadn't been easy, but he doesn't take the good-for-nothing meds anymore. He sticks to trustworthy vitamin D and C.

There's people gathered in the living room, and Eddie freezes when he spots Richie on the couch, strumming his guitar. He's not wearing his glasses today. He is however wearing a purple sweater, and the same ripped jeans he was wearing the first time Eddie met him. Someone says something that makes Richie laugh, bent over his guitar, and Eddie's heart clenches.

Eddie escapes to the bathroom. It's easy to find. He stands in front of the mirror, doing his best to fix his hair with water. Why wasn't he aware Stan knew Richie. How long have they known each other? He smooths out his shirt, and steps back into the little group of people gathered around the couch.

When Richie spots him, he's just finished playing a song, singing along with his slightly raspy, lovely voice. He's smiling, his cheeks flushed, as their little group applauds him. Then he sees Eddie, and his smile widens in a second.

They sit on Stan's balcony, later. It's the 15th of December already. Richie is smoking, and his ankle is pressed against Eddie's.

"How long have you known Stan?" Eddie's playing with the hem of



his shirt distractedly.

Richie scratches at his cheek in consideration, and exhales smoke.

"I don't know. Since we were sixteen? I moved here from Florida"

All the way from Florida? Eddie is a bit surprised, and not only because of that.

"You're kidding?"

Richie looks amused. He shakes his head, a small smile playing on his lips.

"Why?"

"That's when I moved to New York!"

"Well, fuck."

They're quiet, Richie leaning his head back against the wall, Eddie watching him. Eddie imagines a parallel universe where he never moved, where he met a sixteen year old Richie. He imagines him always wearing his glasses, and having shorter hair.

Suddenly he's aware of nineteen year old Richie, very real and right in front of him, watching him.

"What are you thinking about?"

"Your sister". Eddie fires back, for the sake of Richie giggling, placing a warm hand on Eddie's ankle.

Somewhere in the back of his head, Beverly's words linger. He feels like thirteen again, not daring to ask if Richie wants to put a word to this. He tries the word 'boyfriend' on his tongue, not saying it out loud, just imagining. Richie cracks the glass window open, tosses his cigarette butt over the balcony's railing.

A week passes slowly by. Eddie gets bored of staying inside, watching the snow fall, and reading magazines Beverly's left on his floor. He decides to go to the movies, to watch something full of snow and christmas lights, to get him in a festive mood.

As soon as he arrives at the cinema, and steps in line to buy his ticket, he hears a familiar voice. There's no fucking way, he thinks, but there Richie is, pointing out bathrooms and asking what pop corn seasoning someone wants.

"Well, fuck me!" Richie says, when Eddie steps up, and a mother angrily leads her wide-eyed child away. A guy standing next to Richie behind the pay desk nudges him with a snort.

"Eds, how have you been?"

"Good, until now". It's a joke, of course. In fact, Eddie feels giddier, happier than he has in days. Richie smiles at him.

"Good one"

"How come I didn't know you work here?". It's a strange thought. He's hung out - if you can call it that - with Richie enough times by now, he should have surely mentioned working at the cinema already.

"I haven't done it for that long. And it's only part-time." Richie explains. "I can't entirely make a living on the music thing yet. Weird, considering im the epitome of pure talent".

The guy next to him snorts again. Richie points at him with a thumb over the shoulder.

"This is Mike. He makes me less suicidal about working here."

Mike gives a blushing teen couple their change, reaches his hand out to Eddie, introduces himself.

"Don't listen to him. I'm pretty sure he loves working here."

Richie shakes his head.

"You keep telling yourself that."

There's a line forming behind Eddie, and a woman coughs loudly, angrily.

"So, what do you want to watch?"

"I don't know. You decide."

Richie gives him a ticket to Home Alone 2, out of all films, and Eddie isn't exactly expecting a cinematic masterpiece. He never gets a chance to find out, though. Richie sneaks into the empty back row where Eddie's sitting, twenty minutes into the movie.

"What the fuck?" Eddie whispers, and Richie holds up a finger to his lips.

"Mike's covering for me. Bless him"

Eddie laughs, and someone shushes him. Richie's hand finds his over the armrest, and it doesn't take long until Eddie's both blind and deaf to the movie playing, too occupied with wrapping a hand around Richie's neck, and kissing him softly, until their lips are almost bruised with it.

-

Eddie's Christmas Eve is spent with the same group of friends. He has an unpleasant call experience with his mother. It doesn't take long until she's begging him to come home for Christmas. It's almost scary, but still, it takes all of Eddie's willpower to hang up on her pleas.

Christmas is warm and comfortable. Richie kisses him under a mistletoe when barely anyone is looking. He jokingly introduces Eddie as his husband, to Ben&Bev. They raise their eyebrows, in unison, like they don't think Richie's joking at all.

"I hate christmas" Richie says, cheeks dusted red with two glasses of

wine, his head in Eddie's lap. His glasses are folded, tucked into the neckline of his shirt.

"How come?" Eddie's absentmindedly playing with his hair, brushing locks of it against Richie's nose.

"Reminds me of an ex"

"Ex-?"

"Boyfriend. I was so gone for him, and he totally fucked me over. Dumped me on Christmas eve."

"Oh" Eddie doesn't know what else to say.

"Yeah". Richie scrunches his nose up, one of his own curls tickling him. Suddenly, he lets out a laugh.

"I'm never going to call myself someone's boyfriend anymore, probably."

He says it with the same glint in his eye he always has, but Eddie feels his heart drop in disappointment. He lets go of Richie's face, almost reflexively. Richie looks up at him worriedly. Eddie doesn't want to worry him, lets his hand go back to threading careful fingers through Richie's hair.

Richie closes his eyes, leans into Eddie's touch.

"Are you coming to watch me play on New Years?"

"Sure"

-

On New Year's eve, Richie's band performs at a proper venue. It's quite small, and crowded, and Richie argues with the venue owner until Eddie's promised a seat backstage.

Richie is amazing, and gets off the stage all sweaty. Eddie pinches his

nose, and pushes Richie off him when he tries to kiss him, makes him change clothes before the party they go to afterwards.

They salute in the band's honour. The bassist, a girl with green hair named Amanda, pops a bottle of sparkling wine. Eddie watches the foam spill on the ground.

They ring in the new year, 1993, together. The drummer, Caleb, kisses Amanda, and Richie claps for them until Caleb punches him in the arm.

"What was that for!" Richie whines, rubbing at his arm. Eddie pulls at the collar of his shirt, kisses him to the sound of fireworks going off.

Richie makes a surprised noise, but kisses him back. No one's watching them, too busy watching the fireworks, or the person they are kissing.

An hour past midnight, the DJ plays Somebody To Love by Queen, and their entire group sings along. Richie watches Eddie, his smile soft, and his eyes glittering, his mouth forming the words in the chorus.

They end the night like they started it, kissing. They're sitting on a dark flight of stairs outside the gym. The party is held in Eddie's old high school, and he feels nostalgic, though not necessarily in a good way.

He's got his hands in Richie's hair again, like he usually does. There's a genuine, full-on corkscrew curl by his right ear, and Eddie pulls at it, in amusement.

"I love your hair."

"I need to get a haircut."

"No you don't."

Richie kisses him, hard. Suddenly Eddie is reminded of Christmas Eve, and feels himself pulling back. If Richie isn't serious about this,

is there any point in continuing it? His gut feeling tells him yes, and so does his aching heart. But his brain whispers a doubtful no, and it's enough to make him wonder.

Eddie's brow is scrunched up, when their eyes meet.

"Am I- Did I do something?"

He hits the nail on the head, a bit, and Eddie feels almost ashamed. He hopes he hasn't been acting too obvious. It isn't only Richie's fault, after all.

Eddie buries his face in Richie's neck. He wants to avoid an argument, would rather do anything else than this. He sighs, against Richie's skin, and feels one of Richie's hands come up to rest on his waist.

"On Christmas Eve, you said that thing about boyfriends"

Richie is quiet for a while, like he's trying to remember.

"Yeah"

"How you'd never call yourself anyone's boyfriend ever again." Eddie pulls back, to look at Richie, carefully. His hand is still there, and warm on Eddie's waist.

"Oh yeah" Richie laughs a little, the look on his face is relieved, sort of.

"I was a bit drunk then- I shouldn't really be allowed to talk at all when I'm like that. It was a bit silly. Why do you ask-?"

Eddie can see the moment Richie gets it. It's almost comical, how his jaw drops, and his eyes widen.

"I didn't think it was important to you."

Eddie doesn't know if he should be offended. He decides not to be, decides to listen to Richie properly instead. Neither of them have had

much to drink, tonight, and Richie doesn't look tipsy, even.

"Is it important to you?"

Richie shrugs. In the dim, barely-there lighting Eddie can see his cheeks are flushed.

"It's never been that important. Labels, and stuff. I don't mind them though. At all, actually."

He's a bit rambly, and Eddie's heart feels lighter in his chest already.

"I don't mind it at all" Richie continues, looking down at his knees.

"I think I'd really like being someone's boyfriend, again."

Eddie's heart is beating rapidly in his chest now, a swift change from what it was a few minutes ago.

"Someone's?" He raises his eyebrows, and enjoys Richie's ridiculous grin.

"Yours, specifically"

Their knees press together, and Richie's hand dips under Eddie's shirt, to rest on his waist, again. The clock strikes two, and Richie kisses each of Eddie's cheeks. Eddie counts his freckles in the light of the emergency exit lamp, above the door.

"Boyfriends?"

Eddie's smiling wide, a laugh bubbling up his throat. Richie kisses him quiet.

They shake on it.

## Notes for the Chapter:

i was overwhelmed with the positive feedback i got on the last chapter! it means the world to me, truly.

(i don't know how tagging works on ao3)  
@coralinejones commented about a second part possibly being about them dating, and this is how i imagine it happening. i hadn't originally planned for it to be longer than one chapter, but this comment really got me thinking!

there's another fic i've been thinking about writing, and that i'd really like to write, but i'm not sure yet. would anyone be interested in other AUs i come up with?? hmm??

title is still from Every Breath You Take by the police! i thought it was relevant.

two songs i listened to on repeat while writing this, are

-Somebody To Love-Queen

-Rare Hearts-The Growlers

thank you for reading!!

## Author's Note:

English is not my first language, as I'm sure you've noticed.

I will love and appreciate all comments so much, as this is my first published work on this website.

Thank you thank you if you read the whole thing through.

It was written over two late nights, while listening to my outdated october playlist full of 80s songs. It was also written on a mobile device, and I apologise in advance for any typos. Grammatical errors and things like that are obviously my fault. (bilingual am I right!!)



The part about Richie's friends calling him Bigmouth, like in the song by The Smiths, was completely inspired by the fic 'Say That You'll Stay', by @speakslow here on ao3! Please don't sue me.

Title is from Every Breath You Take by the police, because did you guys even WATCH stranger things 2!! I was fucked up.  
Thank you!!